CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR

25X1

SUBJECT Soviet Security Organs

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1. Q. Is there a special militia attached to the MVD? If so, what color is displayed on their shoulderboards?

   A. The Soviet police force (militia) has the official title of "Peasants' and Workers' Militia of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD)". In other words, the MVD has control over the militia. There is thus no need for a special militia to be attached to MVD forces. Members of the militia wear dark blue uniforms with shoulderboards similar to, but not identical with, those of the Soviet Army; shoulderboards of the militia are of the same material as militia uniforms. Rank designations and insignia in the militia are the same as in the Army. Some higher MVD officers are known to wear the militia uniform rather than the MVD uniform. Thus, the MVD officer in the visa section of a consulate abroad sometimes wears the militia uniform although he is not serving in the militia.

2. Q. Recent authoritative information states that the MGB has taken over all the uniformed security agencies (internal troops, convoy, operations; border troops--inside and outside USSR--which were formerly under the control of the MVD).

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   have seen no indications, however, of any basic changes in the system which was known to me. Uniformed security units of the MVD have been under Lavrenti Beria's control for some time, along with the MGB. I am not aware of the detailed organizational structure under which Beria exercises control over the Soviet security organs and the degree of their coordination, but there is no doubt in my mind about the central control being directly exercised by Beria. I do not see any reason why security enforcement personnel should wear different uniforms because of the high level consolidation of control in Beria's hands and am unaware of any such changes.

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25X1

3.

One of the important branches of the MVD is the spetsod'el, the security force assigned to all major economic units. I know the following details concerning its operations. Every factory has a room reserved for the exclusive use of the spetsod'el. This room generally has a reinforced door, barred windows, and a maildrop directly accessible from the outside of the building to facilitate depositing classified material in the room without going through the plant. Only the chief of the spetsod'el unit and his assistant have access to the special room. Broadly speaking, spetsod'el is concerned with Party and Government directives and their fulfillment. The spetsod'el unit in a plant supervises the fulfillment of such directives as they apply to the plant. Actually, spetsod'el, as all security forces of the USSR, interprets its functions very broadly and concerns itself with many details of plant operations. For example, it recruits many informers among the workers and collects reports on the activities, inside and outside of the plant, of their fellow workers and supervisors. Sometimes, spetsod'el uses knowledge of unnoticed or unpunished absenteeism or other offenses as a club to blackmail workers into collaboration. If a worker has the choice between severe punishment threatened by the feared spetsod'el and spying on his fellow workers, he is prone to come to terms even if otherwise he is a decent man. Much of the information on individual workers and employees reaches spetsod'el in a direct and official way. Thus every person applying for a new job has to present not only his work book to prove that he was duly released by his previous employer, but he also has to fill out a personal work history in triplicate. One of the copies is forwarded to the appropriate MVD office, and two copies are retained by the spetsod'el. These forms are compared with information available to the spetsod'el unit at the employee's previous place of employment. During the period from the 20th day of each month and the first day of the following month, each spetsod'el unit prepares a report on the personnel and activities in the economic unit which it supervises; these monthly reports are filed with the MVD.

4.

In the Soviet Army, security functions were originally carried out by the osoby otyed'el, the major function of which was counter-intelligence. During World War II (in 1942 or 1943), this service was discontinued because of the fearful connotation of the "osoby" (special) organizations after Andrei Y Vyshinski's "osoby" investigations leading to the famous purges of the mid-nineteen thirties. The osoby otyed'el was replaced by smersh, an abbreviated form of two Russian words which mean "death to the spies". The name of this new counter-intelligence organization was meant to place emphasis upon efforts directed against external rather than internal foes of the Soviet regime and to appeal to the patriotic instincts of all members of the Army. Actually, smersh retained the functions and the personnel of its predecessor organization. Thus, smersh personnel killed peasants who chose to remain in territory about to be overrun by the German Army rather than to evacuate with the retreating Soviet Army. Likewise, smersh continued to execute Soviet Army personnel for offenses unrelated to espionage.

25X1

that smersh personnel checked on the nature of injuries to determine whether any personnel was hospitalized for self-inflicted wounds. Smersh operates under control of the Ministry of State Security (MGB) and is entirely removed from the authority of the Ministry of Defense. In his own realm, (fnu) Sirov, chief of smersh in Germany, is completely independent of the chief of the Soviet Military Administration in that country. At the divisional level, smersh has a nachal'nik (commandant), a deputy commandant, and 15 enlisted men. Such a detachment maintains its own jail, supervises convoys, guards, and executions. Each regiment and battalion has a smersh representative who reports to the division nachal'nik and requires the latter's permission for making arrests. Such arrests, however, may be made without the knowledge of the division commander; generally, appropriate army commanders are notified after an arrest is made by smersh, although

SECRET/SECURITY INFORMATION   [   ]   25X1

- 3 -

no reasons are cited for such action. Arrests of senior officers have to
be authorized by smersh at corps or army rather than division level, but
even in these cases, army authorities need not be apprised of the reasons.
Army units are responsible for housing, food, uniforms and equipment of
smersh units assigned to them; the cost is borne by the Ministry of Armed
Forces rather than the MGB. Smersh personnel wear green caps with a visor,
a raspberry-colored band around the cap, and the smersh emblem on the
shoulderboard. Since about 1944, they have been authorized to wear the
uniform of the unit to which they are assigned, but most have chosen to
retain the uniform pieces characteristic of smersh. To avoid any possible
confusion, I would like to add that jails are maintained by army units for
purposes other than counter intelligence and not manned by smersh personnel,
and that guard and convoy duty is not exclusively the province of smersh.

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SECRET/SECURITY INFORMATION